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COMMENTS ON PATRISTIC LITERATURE

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COMMENTS ON PATRISTIC LITERATURE

St. Jerome, the Christian Cicero

It is only of late that scholars have begun to realize and to appreciate the importance and influence in the domain of epistolary writing of one of the best known Christian Fathers.¹ That is none other than Eusebius Hieronymus Sophronius, more popularly known as St. Jerome.² His general greatness and versatility and immense productivity have kept from the view of the multitude Jerome's particular genius as a letter writer.³ St. Jerome, the letter writer! How few of us can really appreciate the significance of that designation! His fame, made secure for ages to come by his translation of the New Testament into popular Latin and by his translation of the Chronicle of Eusebius has been undoubtedly the reason for the delay, until recently, of an analysis of the rhetorical eloquence of the style of the letters of St. Jerome. Scholars were satisfied to such an extent with the excellence of the translations and commentaries of St. Jerome that they simply forgot to direct attention to his letters. Yet, together with Cicero, he is the outstanding prose stylist in the field of letter writing. It is indeed a strange phenomenon and an un-

¹The term "Christian Cicero" has been applied to other writers of Christian literature. Jerome himself remarks that Lactantius in language recalls to him the flood of eloquence of Cicero. Because I am treating the two in the same genre, namely, epistolary writing, I use the term "Christian Cicero" of St. Jerome.

²There are several works of excellence dealing with the life and works of St. Jerome. The following are, in my opinion, most commendable: Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme, sa vie et son oeuvre*, Louvain & Paris 1922; Grützmacher, *Hieronymus: eine biographische Studie zur alten Kirchengeschichte*, 3 vols. Berlin 1901, 1906, 1908; Wright, *Select Letters of St. Jerome*, Loeb Classical Library 1933; Freemantle, *Hieronymus, Selected Works Translated*, New York 1893 (in *Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. VI); Largent, *Saint Jérôme*, transl. by Hester Davenport, New York 1913; Pierre de Labriolle, *Hist. lit. chrét.*

³See Table VII in the handbook of Labriolle to appreciate Jerome's contribution to Latin literature.

usual coincidence that the versatility, productivity and genius of Cicero, as in the case of Jerome, should have concealed the grandeur of his letters. There is an astonishing dearth of special studies on the stylistic appreciation of the letters of Cicero. The best that scholars offer has been mere pronouncements of excellence. Fronto, *Ad Antoninum* 2.5 is the ancient locus classicus on the excellence of the letters of Cicero: *Epistulas Ciceronis nihil est perfectius*. We know Cicero better as an orator and philosopher than as a letter writer. We know Jerome better as a translator and commentator than as a letter writer.

Few writers in any age or country can match the immense productivity of St. Jerome. Even Cicero, Livy and Augustine, examples of productivity among the Latin authors, though they come nearest to St. Jerome, fall short of his immense contribution.

It is a remarkable, almost providential phenomenon that the two great Christian Fathers who were Latin letter writers, St. Jerome and St. Augustine, should have found their classical inspiration in Cicero. No great wonder then that Ciceronian echoes are heard in their works. Ciceronianism became almost a religion with Jerome. The power of the classical Cicero gripped him so strongly that his conscience in the form of a dream warned him that he was a Ciceronian, no Christian (Epist. 22.30).

Yet the Latin of this great classicist was not studied for a long time; but today there is no doubt about his place among the immortal writers of Latin. Several recent dissertations have established proof of both the Latinity and the classicism of the works of St. Jerome.⁴

A study of the rhetorical and stylistic qualities of the letters of St. Jerome proves my reason for calling him

⁴E.g., Herron, *A Study of the Clausulae in the Writings of St. Jerome*, Catholic University of America Patristic Studies 51, Washington 1937; Gillis, *The Coordinating Particles in Saints Hilary, Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine*, CUAPS 56, Washington 1938.

the Christian Cicero.⁵ It is interesting and illuminating to note two of the many features of style in which Cicero and St. Jerome resemble each other. The first is variety of subject-matter, the second is adaptability of style to subject-matter.⁶ The letters of St. Jerome range in subject from interpretations of Biblical passages to a catalogue of a clergyman's duties and his advice on feminine training. Typically, the letters may be grouped as domestic and biographical, epitaphic and consolatory, exhortatory, polemic, didactic, exegetic-dogmatic. Cicero is no less varied in subject-matter, dealing with all his normal and characteristic activities. He, like Jerome, complains, apologizes, congratulates, condones in letters.

St. Jerome possessed a truly Ciceronian faculty of adapting style to subject. The two styles employed in his letters differ in degree, not in kind. We may designate them formal and informal, as Abbott uses these terms in introducing Cicero's letters. The difference is the difference between the literary and the colloquial, which in St. Jerome means the difference between the more rhetorical and the less rhetorical, or the grand and plain. I am not, however, suggesting a total absence of the colloquial. All genuine private letters contain some elements of *sermo cotidianus*. Where an appeal is made to the feelings, to the emotions, to the imagination, as in letters in which sympathy is offered a sorrowful Paula, or in which consolation is extended a friend on the loss of his nephew, or in which advice is given on the preservation of virtue, or in which arguments are directed against detractors, St. Jerome uses every ounce of his oratorical power and with Ciceronian skill displays incredible ability to produce effects and to create atmosphere by rhetorical flourishes. This is the most characteristic style of his letters. The floridity of this style, however, is offset by a smoothness of sentence structure, by sincerity of purpose, by intensity of feeling. Cicero, too, employs two distinct styles in his rhetoric according to the demands of the situation. It is true that Cicero reveals in one of his letters that we can expect to find colloquialism there (*Ad Fam.* 9.21). But the presence of colloquialism in letters does not necessarily detract from the rhetorical quality of the style. Cicero suited the style of his letters to the subject-matter and to the character of the person addressed. As most of his correspondents were men of culture, a formal style is most frequent in his letters.

What has been said concerning the language and style of Jerome in the translation of the Bible is applicable even in a greater degree to the style of Jerome's

letters: Human language has never received a more violent shock than this sudden outbreak of the prophets and biblical hyperbole *into the idiom of Cicero*. (The italics are mine.) The style of the letters likewise represents a combination of the clarity, the precision, the transparency, the purity of Cicero's Latin which won the high esteem of Fronto. The 154 letters which fill nearly 1600 pages in the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* show a style that justifies Erasmus when in the preface to his edition of the works of St. Jerome he names the Father 'the Christian Cicero.'

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Nicolas de Lyra, 1270-1349

Nicolas de Lyra, a Franciscan monk, was a member of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris in the first three decades of the fourteenth century. He wrote a running, verse by verse, commentary on the whole Bible, Old and New Testaments. This stupendous work is usually referred to as the *Postillae Perpetuae* of Nicolas de Lyra. Because of his excellent grasp of the Hebrew language, and because of his intimate acquaintance with the Hebrew commentaries on the Bible, ancient and mediaeval, Lyra has been called "the St. Jerome of the Later Middle Ages." He is justly famous for the wide use he made of the Hebrew commentaries of the celebrated French Jewish exegete, Rabbi Solomon Isaac (Rashi), c. 1030-1105.¹

What interests us here especially is that in spite of all the difficulties that beset Lyra he made his Latin flexible for conveying Hebrew ideas. Now it is difficult enough to make Latin (as St. Jerome had well done) capable of bearing accurate, natural and idiomatic images of speech of Biblical Hebrew. But it is a far greater task to translate into Latin the thought of Rabbinic Hebrew, in order to enlarge the understanding of "the Latin Bible for those who can read and write Latin." In this, Lyra did a remarkable service for the whole field of historical Biblical exegesis. In accordance with the scope of this publication and the space allotted to this article, we will look at two such characteristic "versions" of the Midrash and Rashi by Lyra, of which there are illustrations on almost every folio of Lyra's magnum opus, and sometimes several on a folio.

We cite here for example Lyra's language on Genesis 4.1:

Adam vero cognovit uxorem suam. Dicunt Hebraei,

⁵See my dissertation, *The Style of the Letters of St. Jerome*, CUAPS 60, Washington 1939.

⁶For a convenient classification of the figures of rhetoric which form a large part of my study of Jerome's style, see the table of contents of the dissertation cited above, note 5.

¹Other treatments of Lyra and his language by Dr. Hailperin include the article "Nicolas de Lyra" in *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* 7 (1942) 257; Rashi and Nicolas de Lyra: *The Minor Prophets*, Rashi Anniversary Volume, New York 1941, 115-47; *Jewish 'Influence' on Christian Biblical Scholars in the Middle Ages*, *Historica Judaica* 4 (1942) 2.163-74. ED.

quod ista dicuntur per modum recapitulationis, et quod Adam genuit istos pueros antea cum adhuc esset in paradiso voluptatis. Quod confirmant per illud quod supradictum est homini, *Crescite et multiplicamini*, quod intelligitur de actu generationis; et idea dicunt quod formata muliere et adducta ad Adam, statim cognovit eam carnaliter, cum dixisset, *Et haerebit uxori suae*, alioquin esset transgressor praedicti praecepti.

For the sake of context, it is necessary to give part of this in English:

Adam knew his wife. The Hebrews say [as related in Rashi] that those things are said by way of recapitulation, and that Adam had begotten those children before, when up to now he was in the Paradise of (spiritual) delight.

The perfect tense *genuit* of the Latin of Lyra here conveys accurately the intention in the Rashi text. Rashi had explained thus:

And the man knew—[This happened] already before that which was previously stated, [namely,] before he [Adam] sinned and was driven out of the Garden of Eden; and this refers also to Eve's conception and bearing, for if the text had written, "*And Adam knew*," we should have thought [that all this happened] and that [it was not until] after Adam was driven out that he had children, [but since it says *yada*, the meaning is that the word refers to the time before he was driven out].

Like Rashi before him, Lyra (on Genesis 12:2) wonders why Scripture says "Go forth out of thy country"; for Abram had already left with his father, as was stated previously (Genesis 11:31). "Some respond," says Lyra, "that although he will have gone out *in body*, yet not *in mind*, because he intended to return thither; and to prevent this, it is said to him: Go forth, etc." Lyra then approves Rashi's explanation. Rashi had written in his Commentary: "*Out of thy country*. Had he not already gone out from there with his father, and already come to Haran? But thus He said to him: Thou shalt remove further from there [Haran], and go out of thy father's house." Lyra endows this with complete clarity:

Egredere de terra. Id est Chaldea in qua natus est. Sed quaeritur, quomodo hoc sibi dicitur, cum iam diu ante egressus fuisset inde cum patre suo, ut praedictum est? Et respondent aliqui, quod licet egressus fuerit corpore, non tamen mente, quia intendebat illuc redire; et ad hoc excludendum dicitur ei: *Egredere etc.* Sed hoc non videtur probabile, quod vellet redire sub tyrannide Nemrod qui adhuc regnabat—infra, Amraphel Rex Sennar etc.—de quo dicunt omnes Hebraei quod iste erat Nemrod, qui et erat binomius; et idea melius dicitur: *Egredere de terra tua*, id est longius recede ab ea. Et hoc videtur per litteram Hebraicam quae sic habet. "Vade tibi de terra tua," ac si diceret, 'pro utilitate tua vade longius a terra tua.'

Now the last clause in Lyra is a paraphrase of Rashi on verse 1. Rashi there takes note of the dative, *leka* (i.e., the Hebrew dativeus commodi, 'go for thyself'). 'For thy own benefit, for thy own good,' says Rashi; pro utilitate tua is wholly adequate.

Lyra, unlike most other mediaeval Christian exegetes, reveals a remarkable grasp of Hebrew and Rabbinic idea in his explication of passages construed messianically and christologically by the Church. In chapters

7, 8, and 9 of Isaiah, he shows himself a consummate artist in his Christian exegesis; New Testament, Targum, and Rashi all combine in his mind to form one organic fabric. Yet it is to be noted that Lyra does not blunder into it. It is not a mere artifice, and it certainly is not false to him, intellectually, to make this synthesis of materials seemingly disparate.

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A Christian Argument Against Rhetoric

The two chief speeches of the dialogue Octavius of Minucius Felix are separated by a short interlude (chapters 14-6) which is in effect an argument against rhetoric. The Christians Octavius and Minucius are the speakers here, and their target is the pagan Caecilius. The attack is provoked by Caecilius, who closes his speech against Christianity with a challenge to Octavius, calling him a man of Plautine stock, chief of millers, least of philosophers (14.1 homo Plautinae prosapiae, ut pistorum praecipuus, sic postremus philosophorum).

This collection of epithets needs only brief comment here.¹ *Plantinae* and *pistorum* together obviously refer to the tradition connecting Plautus with a mill (Aulus Gellius 3.3.14); they also throw some light on Octavius. The latter is said to have come to Rome on business (2.1 negotii et visendi mei gratia Romam contenderat); he is called pistorum praecipuus (14.1); his name Octavius Ianuarius occurs in an inscription from Saldæ, the modern Bougie, in North Africa (CIL 8.8962, name only). Saldæ was a port which was "the shipping point for the extreme west of the great agricultural region."² It is reasonable to suppose that Octavius's business was connected with the grain trade, and Caecilius's gibe 'chief of millers' would indicate that he was at least moderately successful. The allusion to Plautus might also indicate that Octavius was expected to speak well; second-century opinion of Plautus calls him "Linguae Latinae decus" (Fronto in Aulus Gellius 19.8.6).

Caecilius however, whether or not he intended a comment on Octavius's ability as a speaker, bluntly calls him no philosopher (postremus philosophorum). This opinion he had expressed earlier in the dialogue, saying that Octavius would learn that it was easier to argue among friends than to engage in a philosophical battle (4.4 facilius esse in contubernaliis disputare quam conserere sapientiam). Minucius, the judge of the debate, interferes (14.2) and turns the argument against Caecilius, praising the cleverness and charm of his speech, but decrying the use of rhetorical devices to change or

¹Text, emendations and interpretations are discussed in my edition of the Octavius, New York 1938, 78-9.

²R. M. Hayward, Roman Africa, in Frank, An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome, Baltimore 1938, 4.111.

conceal the truth, and so to mislead the hearer. Briefly stated, the theme is that substance (truth or philosophy) is more important than style (rhetoric). Caecilius resents this criticism as a prejudging of the debate (15.1), but Minucius answers (15.2) that facts, not eloquence, must weigh the scale. Octavius then begins the second main speech of the dialogue, the defense of Christianity, but in his introduction (16) continues the argument against rhetoric. He belittles Caecilius's unstable cleverness as rising from an unstable philosophy (Scepticism) and reverts to a statement made twice previously by Caecilius (5.4, 12.7), that the poor and uneducated should not dabble in philosophy. Octavius asserts that wisdom is a gift of nature, not of fortune, that the truth of a speech is more to be sought than the authority of the speaker, and in conclusion that the less polished the speech, the more brilliant the reasoning.

This argument against rhetoric is, as might be expected, full of rhetorical figures. There are many antitheses, which are handled with such skill and variety that they do not seem monotonous. Minucius uses also in this section such figures as alliteration (14.1-2, quoted above), asyndeton (14.3 *eligere, probare, suscipere*; 16.5 *aegre se ferre, stomachari, indignari, dolere*), *figura etymologica* (14.1-2 *Plautinae . . . plaudere*).

The case of rhetoric against philosophy is as old as Plato; it is stated in the *Gorgias* and with different emphasis in the *Phaedrus*. It is noteworthy that a rhetorician of the second century, Aelius Aristeides of Smyrna, undertook to refute the arguments of the *Gorgias* and to defend rhetoric. At Rome the conflict of rhetoric and philosophy must have been given added point by the amicable disagreement of the rhetorician Fronto and his imperial pupil and friend Marcus Aurelius. The Emperor early deserted rhetoric for philosophy (*Meditations* 1.7), but Fronto was always its firm champion, and his description of his own virtuous life (*De Nepote Amisso* 8) reads like an attempt to show that rhetoric as well as philosophy could mold character.

Fronto is twice mentioned in the *Octavius*, once by Caecilius as author of a speech in which the Christians are charged with immorality (9.6 *id etiam Cirtensis nostri testatur oratio*), and in the same connection by Octavius in his refutation. Octavius picks up Caecilius's word 'testatur' and says that Fronto in his speech did not offer supporting testimony but flung abuse like an orator (31.2 *Sic de isto et tuus Fronto non ut adfirmator testimonium fecit, sed convicium ut orator aspersit*). If as seems plausible this part of the *Octavius* (28-31) was designed to answer Fronto,³ the argument against

rhetoric would serve indirectly to discredit his authority by belittling the importance of any rhetorician, and so to decrease the force of his accusations; it would also by implication raise the estimate of Christianity, classing it with all the accepted philosophies which from Plato on had opposed rhetoric. At this period the conflict of rhetoric and philosophy could be stated in human terms as Fronto vs. Marcus Aurelius; the prestige of the Emperor inevitably weighted the scales. Minucius is too good a lawyer to refuse the weapon of implication; his argument against rhetoric is designed to undermine the pagan position and to prepare for the Christian victory.

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A Phantom Work of Abbo of Fleury

In 1746 the Benedictines of the Congregation of St. Maur published a list of the writings of Abbo, Abbot of Fleury 988-1004, in which the twenty-second is a work reported to be found in a manuscript of the "College de S. Benoît" at Cambridge and to be there entitled *De vita S. Martini*.¹ Abbo's prose life of St. Edmund and his Porfyrian verses on St. Dunstan reveal his predominantly scientific spirit as not indifferent to the claims of hagiography,² and the possibility that he produced a life of the great apostle of Gaul is one which easily arouses the interest of any student of Abbo or of tenth-century culture. The Cambridge text has, none the less, never been printed. While its significance for Abbo was appreciably lessened in 1912 when Dom Berliere (without advancing his reasons) pronounced the work a composition falsely attributed to the abbot of Fleury,³ it would seem still to remain an object of concern for the literary tradition of St. Martin.⁴

With their accustomed thoroughness, the Maurists indicated the source from which their information was taken. This is a catalogue of the manuscripts of St. Benet's College (i.e., Corpus Christi College) made by Thomas James and published in 1600. The pertinent item is there described as follows:⁵

Abbo Floriacensis & Osbernus (uti colligo ex animadversione cujusdam Neoterici) de vita S. Martini, & aliorum plurimorum Sanctorum, cum aliis diversis contentis.

Without pausing to wonder why the Maurist historians felt secure in concluding simply from this evi-

¹Hist. lit. de la France (Paris 1746) 7.181.

²M. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur der Mittelalter* (Munich 1923) 2.670-1.

³Article on Abbo in A. Baudrillart, *Dict. d'hist. et de géogr. eccl.* (Paris 1912) 1.51.

⁴A. Van de Vyver, "Les oeuvres inédites d'Abbon de Fleury," *Rev. Bénéd.* 47 (1935) 125-69, has nothing to say of such a work; nor had Manitius, *op. cit.*, 664-72.

⁵T. James, *Ecloga Oxoniensis Cantabrigiensis* 76 (London 1600), reprinted by Edward Bernard, *Cat. libr. mss. Angl. et Hib.* 1.3.134.

³Fronto and the *Octavius* are discussed and authorities cited in my edition, page 11 and notes. The most recent statement which I have seen is in Edgar J. Goodspeed, *A History of Early Christian Literature*, University of Chicago Press 1942, 221-4.

dence that the *De vita S. Martini* belonged to Abbo rather than to Osbern of Canterbury, we pass to the excellent description of the manuscript published by the late M. R. James.⁶ The codex (C.C.C.C. 42; saec. XII, from Dover Priory) carries, on folio 1, an owner's note, from which, clearly, the greater part of Thomas James's account was taken. The first two gatherings of the book contain *Vitae* of St. Martin and of St. Brice,⁷ but these are drawn from well known texts of Sulpicius Severus and Gregory of Tours and have nothing to do with Abbo. However, Abbo's *Vita S. Eadmundi* follows and, after a portion of a legendary, is succeeded by Osbern's *Vita S. Dunstani*. A set of *Miracula B. Virginis* and various liturgical additions complete the book.

This analysis of the manuscript indicates the origin of Thomas James's misleading description, which, in turn, led the Maurists to give nominal existence to what is unhappily a literary nonentity.

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Chrysostom Too Golden-Mouthed

One of the most interesting studies connected with Christian literature is the struggle of the various preachers and writers with the great problem of the feasibility, the morality even, of pagan literary forms for Christian purposes. But we are likely to miss the importance of the problem if we regard it only as a study in attitudes and prejudices, without understanding that to the early Christian writers it was a matter of compromise with a way of life, not merely with aesthetic principles. Knowing the answer to the problem, we can smile at Tertullian calling schoolmasters people "on the brink of all sorts of idolatry" (*De Idolat.* 10) or we can marvel at Minucius Felix who could write a long defense of Christianity and only twice mention Christ. And Apollinaris' "grammar consistent with the Christian faith" and his "books of Moses in heroic verse"¹ must have been bad indeed. But in the minds of the Christian writers it was more than a question of adopting mere literary forms; it was a danger of infection by the whole of pagan life.

For, apace with the growth of Christianity and by way of reaction, Neo-Sophism was developing in the pagan schools. It was more than a literary formula, for it afforded those who preferred the old gods to the new ideas a refuge in aesthetics, sensible aesthetics. Neo-Sophism was a philosophy of life, a literary existence

concerned with form to the exclusion of matter, infatuated with sound and rhythm, delighting in dialectic subtleties, the elegant style, the precise technique. Its main expression was rhetoric and its most honored citizen the rhetorician. And, most important from the Christian point of view, all education was sophistic, so that both Christian preachers and Christian people were steeped in it.

In the latter part of the fourth century both Neo-Sophism and the infant Church were having their Golden Age. Long strides towards a final solution of the old problem were being made by the three Cappadocians and most of all by John (Chrysostom), who was more eloquent than the sophists themselves. However, even as late as the year 400 he found it necessary to inveigh against the sophistic attitude of his audiences. In two sermons he shows us the problem as a practical difficulty that would have to be solved before Christianity could be really efficient. The first passage is strangely reminiscent of a grade teacher scolding her pupils for their over-childishness:

Why should I come in, you say, if I am not to hear someone discoursing? This is the ruin and destruction of everything. For what need is there of discourse? This need has arisen from our sloth. Why should there be need of a homily? Everything in the Holy Scriptures is open and clear, everything necessary is plain. But since you are hearers for pleasure's sake, for this reason you look for these things. Tell me, with what elegance of language did Paul speak?—yet he converted the world. And with what the illiterate Peter? But, you say, I don't know what is in the Scriptures? Why don't you? For they are not written in Hebrew, are they? nor in Latin? nor in a foreign tongue? Is not the language Greek? But, you say, they are obscure. How are they obscure, tell me? Are they not narratives? For surely you know the things that are clear, that you should question the obscure. There are countless narratives in the Scriptures. Tell me one! But you won't. This is an excuse, and mere words. Every day, you say, we hear the same things. Why, tell me? At the spectacles do you not hear the same things? At the races do you not see the same things? Is not daily life always the same? Is it not always the same sun that rises? Is it not the same food that we use? I wish to ask you, since you say that you hear the same things every day, tell me, from what prophet was the passage that was read out, from what apostle, or from what letter? But you cannot say; rather you think you are hearing mysteries. . . . When you say that the other things are always the same, but that mine are not the same, do you pay attention to these? Not at all. But if I ask, "Why do you not retain these?" you say, "We hear them only once and how is it possible to retain them?" If I ask you, "Why do you not pay attention to the other things?" you say, "The same things are always being said." And your words are due entirely to sloth and pretence. (In *Epist. II ad Thessal.* 2, Hom. III.4)

The second passage gives the problem in terms of cause and effect. It is a monument to the informality of the relations between preacher and congregation:

Wherefore, excuse me, I beg you, if my sermon delays on this unfortunate matter. Many make every effort once they have the floor to stretch out their speech. And if they are applauded by the congregation, that is to them

⁶M. R. James, *A descriptive catalogue of the manuscripts in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (Cambridge 1909) 1.85-7. I have not seen the manuscript itself.

⁷M. R. James mentions no *Vita* of St. Brice, but an explicit he transcribes corresponds to the close of the most common *Vita S. Bricii* (No. 1452 in the Bollandists' *Bibl. Hag. Lat.*).

the equal of heaven; but if they finish their speech in silence, their despondency at the silence is to them more serious than hell. This has toppled churches, the fact that you do not wish to hear a sermon that will give compunction, but one that will give you pleasure because of the sound and arrangement of words, as if you were listening to singers and citharists. And we are cold and wretchedly hard of heart in following your desires, when we should be plucking them out. The same thing happens as when a father gives his delicate child cake and cream and only the things he likes, even though he is sickly. . . . This is what we do when we waste our time on beauties of expression and with composition and intonation, so as to please, not to help; to be admired, not to teach; to enjoy ourselves, not to feel compunction; to stir up applause and to depart with praise, not to order life.

(At this point the congregation applauded the manifold homoioteleuton and the isocola of this passage: ὅπως ἦσομεν, οὐχ ὅπως ὠφελήσωμεν· ὅπως θανμάσθωμεν, οὐχ ὅπως δαδάξωμεν· ὅπως τερψόμεν, οὐχ ὅπως κατανύξωμεν· ὅπως κροτηθῶμεν, καὶ ἐπαίνου τυχόντες ἀπέλθωμεν, οὐχ ὅπως τὰ ἡθῆ ῥυθμίσωμεν.)

He continues:

Why do you applaud? It is about this that I am making the law. But you do not even wait to hear me. This is the fountain-head of many good things, including a discipline in philosophy. Even pagan philosophers expounded and no applause is ever told of them; the apostles preached and we never read that their hearers interrupted them with applause in the middle of their preaching. This is a great gain to us. But let us establish this rule: let us listen to everyone peacefully and let us have our full say. . . . These things I beg and entreat all of you to perceive; for I go about in search of ways to help your souls. And I consider this no small way: it will help not only you, but us also. It will not permit us to rush headlong, nor to be in love with praises and glory, nor to say pleasing things, but useful ones. Nor shall we spend our time concerned with combinations of words and beauties of expression, but rather with the force of ideas. Go to an art studio and observe the great silence there. Let it be the same here; for here too we are painting pictures, royal pictures, not a private citizen's, with the paints of virtue. (In Acta Apost., Hom. XXX.3-4)

After this last outburst of applause the harried preacher could only conclude, with the lame excuse that restraint in this matter is not easy, for the habit of applause has been long developing. Whereupon, he may have been applauded again.

TERENCE J. FITZSIMONS

WESTON COLLEGE

Sed Tamen in Pretio Est

Pierre de Labriolle concludes his treatment of Lactantius with the remark that the disfavor in which modern times hold the author of the Divine Institutes is somewhat excessive. And I add another voice of protest against the prevalent oblivion to which this "Christian Cicero" is undeservedly condemned. Even his most ardent admirer must of necessity concede that as a theologian he does not count, "sed tamen in pretio est." A pagan rhetor turned Christian apologist, he is

the most typical man of his crucial times, times that are a turning point in the history of western civilization since they witness the victory of Christianity under Constantine over the traditional paganism of Rome. With Felix among his predecessors, with Jerome, Augustine and Cassiodorus among his successors, Lactantius must be reckoned as a permanent influence in determining the attitude of later Christian ages toward the pagan culture to which it fell heir.

In the year 290 Diocletian summoned Lactantius from his native Africa to the chair of Latin rhetoric at the newly established capital of Nicomedia.¹ Here he embraced the Christian faith at the turn of the century, and here he began to defend it with an apology at the outbreak of the last general persecution in 303. In the Spring of 305 Galerius, implacable foe of the rhetorical schools, succeeded Diocletian as Augustus, and shortly afterwards Lactantius left Nicomedia for Gaul. There the Church was openly enjoying under Constantine the immunity from persecution it had previously enjoyed by connivance under his father Constantius Chlorus. The persecution over, he returned to the East and completed the Institutes at about the time of the final emancipation of the Church by the Edict of Milan in 313.

Although Jerome at the end of the fourth century does not neglect to note Lactantius' doctrinal failings, he yet holds him in high esteem and makes repeated reference to his learning and eloquence.² Augustine and Cassiodorus, who, along with Jerome, were influential in determining the animus of later Christian times towards the pagan culture, list him among the faithful by whom the ancient learning was effectively employed in the service of religion. And we have ample evidence that the Middle Ages knew and copied his writings in the number of their manuscripts from the seventh to the thirteenth century.³ With the Renaissance, of course, this Christian humanist was enthusiastically acclaimed, often in sentiments similar to those of Petrarch, who calls him 'vir et poetarum et philosophorum notitia, et Ciceroniana facundia, et quod cuncta transcendit, Catholica religione clarissimus.'⁴ And with the introduction of printing he became the most edited of Christian writers. His works appeared as the first dated book printed in Italy.

Beginning with the eighteenth century, interest in Lactantius has declined steadily, and if today he is recognized, it is mainly because of the historical data

¹For the sources and discussion of the common Lactantian data see Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity*, translated by H. Wilson 1924, and Paul Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne* 3, 1905.

²The opinions of Jerome, Augustine, Cassiodorus and others are collected in the "Testimonia Vetera" of Brandt's edition, CSEL 27.161-7. On the entire fate of Lactantius see René Pichon, *Lactance*, 1901, 448-56.

³Brandt, *Opera Omnia*, CSEL 19.ix-x.

⁴Migne, PL 6.79B-82B, esp. 80A. See also CSEL 19.x-xi.

he supplies in *De Mortuis Persecutorum*. Yet the Nicomedian rhetor still has an occasional staunch defender like E. K. Rand, who, convinced of his rôle in the history of western culture, ranks him as one of the "founders of the Middle Ages" and "by all odds the most important of the apologetes" (*Founders of the Middle Ages*, 1929, 49-50; 163), while the standard patristic writers, such as Bardenheuer, Labriolle, Monceaux and Pichon, are not induced by his theological mistakes to deny a meed of praise to his positive contributions.

Not only to most writers who deal with the history of western civilization and culture in a general way, but even to those who have taken the life and letters of the fourth century as a special field of investigation, Lactantius and his *Institutes* have little significance. Although Gaston Boissier exhibits strong reliance on *De Mortuis Persecutorum* in *La fin du paganisme*, he all but disregards the apologetic rôle of Lactantius, while other works (including T. R. Glover's *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century* and Theodore Haarhoff's *Schools of Gaul, a Study of Pagan and Christian Education in the Last Century of the Western Empire*) quite miss his significance for the period of formation with which they deal.

Haarhoff may be taken as typical of the disregard accorded Lactantius by such authors. Of two scant references to him, both in the short section on "The Persistence of Rhetoric," the first merely remarks that only Lactantius, a layman, dared to defend rhetoric openly, and the second states, on the authority of Ozanam's *History of Civilization*, that "Tertullian, Arnobius and Lactantius on entering the Church abjured the heathen literature." Now it is significant that the *Divine Institutes* condemn the *Apologeticum* of Tertullian as a failure because of its hostile attitude towards the pagan writers, and proclaim their own intention of attracting the educated pagan through extensive use of the ancient authors.⁵ It is likewise significant that Lactantius does not mention his teacher Arnobius, whose *Adversus Nationes*, written in advanced age as a pledge of the sincerity of his conversion (Jerome, *Epist.* 70.5), bears little resemblance to the spirit of his own apology. Haarhoff's scant recognition of the "Christian Cicero" in a study that treats the rhetorical tradition in the fourth and fifth centuries in Gaul, and his consideration of him among the opponents of this tradition demonstrate that he does not appreciate the true character of the *Institutes* or of the rôle they play, as a result, in the Christian cultural tradition of the West.

The *Divine Institutes* appear at an important cross-

⁵*Div. Inst.* 5.1 & 4. Tertullian's intransigent spirit is best seen in *De Testimonio Animae* I; there is an excellent collection of his views in Charles Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* 1940, 222-8.

roads in history, at a time when the Church finally emerges triumphant from centuries of pagan persecution, soon to form a close alliance with the Roman Empire. The mind of the Middle Ages, whose final mould Jerome and Augustine were to determine, was receiving its first impressions at the beginning of the fourth century. During this period of great changes the fate of the traditional learning hung in the balance, for if the rigorist tradition of Tertullian should prevail, the hated pagan culture could hardly hope to survive, while the predominance of the human tradition of Felix and Lactantius would assure Christian culture protection in the bosom of the Church as the handmaid of the Christian faith.

When the *Institutes* appeared the educated were streaming into the Church in large numbers, and it was to satisfy their needs that Lactantius wrote. In the opening chapters of Book V he clearly states the purpose of his work and enumerates the drawbacks which rendered the apologies of his predecessors inadequate for the problems of his day (5.1.9-28; 2.1-2; 4 entire. See also 1.1.7-10.). Among the educated, he says, even the converts are being lured away from the faith by the polished style of the philosophers and orators or the sweet-sounding modulations of the poets, and men taught to associate truth with refined and elegant expression are repulsed by the popular diction of the Scriptures and the ignorance of those who expound them. Most of the Latin apologists were quite unlettered, while among the learned, Cyprian and Tertullian employed the wrong approach, and Minucius Felix, although his Octavius possessed the proper spirit, and employed an effective procedure, failed to give adequate development to his subject. In this enumeration of the errors of Tertullian and Cyprian and in his approval of the *animus* of Felix—that detailed in the second last chapter of Octavius—Lactantius supplied a catalogue of the main traits patent in his own work: it is written in the pleasant and fluent style of an educated man; it presents a positive synthesis of Christianity on broad, philosophical lines; it is based on reason and argument rather than on faith; and it seeks backing from the literature of the pagans, not from the Scriptures, the better to convince the opponent.

The Nicomedian rhetor whom Jerome refers to as "quasi quidam fluvius eloquentiae Tullianae," and Picus Mirandulus calls the "Christian Cicero,"⁶ announces his intention in the first chapter of his apology of employing the skill gained in his profession to present the faith in an attractive guise. In order to offset the pernicious effects of pagan literature he plans to make learning the handmaid of Christianity, to employ good form to draw the educated to the Church:

Ob eam causam volui sapientiam cum religione con-

⁶Jerome, *Epist.* 58.10; CSEL 19.xi.

iungere, ne quid studiosis inanis illa doctrina possit offere, ut iam scientia litterarum non modo nihil noceat religioni atque iustitiae, sed etiam prosit quam plurimum, si is, qui eas didicerit, sit in virtutibus instructor, in veritate sapientior. (5.1.11)

Considering the status of the rhetorical tradition among the Christians of Gaul as Haarhoff describes it, as also the character of the Institutes and the circumstances of the author's life, it does not seem reasonable to deny Lactantius' influence on these times. In the third century, especially in 292 under Constantius Chlorus, learning experienced a revival here; and in the fourth and fifth centuries and throughout the Middle Ages the province outstripped the mother country in its support of the ancient culture.⁷ By the fifth century the Church had replaced the state in Gaul as an influence in intellectual matters, and thus it became the protector of the rhetorical tradition that had come down to it through the centuries, preserved in the established curriculum of the pagan schools which made oratory the goal of all education. Despite constant opposition to the learning which was intimately associated with the pagan religion, men like Augustine, Jerome, Paulinus of Nola, Prudentius and Sedulius foresaw the

futility of such resistance, "and they realized that it was one of the functions of the Church to hand down what was good in the old culture."⁸

Besides the writings of St. Cyprian, the third century is barren of significant Latin Christian literature. After Felix at the end of the second century Lactantius alone manifests the human outlook that would qualify him to serve as an exemplar for the Christian writers of Gaul who handed on the rhetorical tradition to later times. Nor could he well have escaped the notice of these writers during his lifetime, for Book V of the Institutes was written outside of Bithynia, probably in the peaceful province while Galerius was hounding the schools of the East.⁹ And he likely died at Treves, for Jerome informs us that honor came to him when advanced in years through his appointment as tutor to the Emperor's son Crispus (De Vir. Ill. 80; see CSEL 27.162). In fact, Apollinaris Sidonius, Gennadius and Prosper of Aquitaine name him, while Salvian, Ausonius, Sulpicius Severus, and even the Emperor Constantine give evidence of having read one or other of his writings.¹⁰

BROTHER ALBAN

MANHATTAN COLLEGE

REVIEWS

Griechische Plastik des 4. Jahrhunderts vor Christus. Untersuchungen zur Zeitbestimmung. By HANS KARL SÜSSEROTT. 231 pages, 38 plates. Klostermann, Frankfurt 1938 13.50 M.

In this book Süsserott attempts to lay down principles by which the monuments of fourth-century sculpture may be more exactly dated. His method is interesting. In a first section he analyzes a series of works which can be closely dated, especially reliefs associated with decrees or treasurers' accounts and the series of Panathenaic amphorae; a second section is devoted to a discussion of datable dedicatory reliefs and grave monuments and to criteria for tracing development. On the basis of the reliefs and the amphorae, Süsserott then proceeds to define the character of the human figure in every decade from 410 B.C. to the early years of the third century. The criteria on which he bases his argument can best be suggested by translating a quotation for the decade 360-50 from his summary "Characteristics Important for the Development of Style" (126-7);

Somewhat heavier, powerful bodies. Base broader. Free leg set at side, with heel turned out and knee turned in. Relaxation in pose. Plumbline falls between firm leg and free leg. S-shaped forms. More movement forward and back. Rhythm the opposite of that in the two preceding decades: rising on the side of the free leg, culminating in the head, downwards on the side of the firm leg. Center of gravity in the abdomen. Drapery fuller and heavier, emphasizing bodily forms. Figures posed obliquely to background. Semicircular outline for whole composition.

⁷Schools of Gaul 1920, 37-45 passim.

In a third section the author examines a long series of works in the round and, on the basis of his criteria, attempts to assign them to the appropriate decades. His datings for some of the most familiar works give an idea of the results of this examination. (When the preserved monuments are copies, the dates of course apply to the originals.) To the decade 390-80 he assigns the Apollo Sauroktonos, the Idolino, and the Eros of Centocelle; to 380-70, the Eirene of Kephisodotos; to 370-60, the Dresden Artemis and the small bronze diadumenos in the Metropolitan Museum (BMM 16 [1921] 33, fig. 1); to 360-50, the Lansdowne Herakles and the Hermes of Praxiteles (Süsserott argues that evidences of a later period in the Hermes are due to reworking in Roman times, when possibly the statue was damaged in the course of its removal to the Heraeum); to 350-40, the Marble Faun and Skopas's Maenad (ca. 350), the portrait of Mausollos (towards the end of the decade), the Cnidian Aphrodite and the Meleager of Skopas (ca. 340); to 330-20, the Apoxyomenos of Lysippos (near the end of the decade); to 320-10, the Artemis of Gabii (early in the decade; it reflects, not a work of Praxiteles, but that of a follower and has no connection with the Artemis Brauronia), the Apollo Belvedere and the Artemis of Versailles (near end of decade).

It is obviously impossible in a brief review to criticize a book of this character in detail. But one may fairly question the basis of Süsserott's elaborate scheme. Even

⁸Op. cit. 151-74, esp. 173.

⁹Div. Inst. 5.2.2; 11.15; De Mort. Pers. 15.7; 16.1; 22.4-5; 24.9.

¹⁰See CSEL 17.155-67; Pichon, Lactance, 448-50.

in a development like the Greek in which the lesser artists followed closely the innovations of the leaders, it seems unlikely that progress was so uniform that works of sculpture and painting can be definitely assigned to decades on stylistic grounds. One does not think of the Greeks as "regimented" to such an extreme. And were there not conservatives and less able sculptors who clung to the older forms? This reviewer at least has often found it hard to follow the argument in many cases where it is based on very slight differences. Nevertheless one cannot but respect a critic who is so obviously convinced that he has found the thread of Ariadne to lead us through the labyrinth of fourth-century art. If the book had been published under happier circumstances, it would undoubtedly have inspired many articles and perhaps it may yet do so.

Three excursuses (one on the development of the "Leaning Athena," one on the dating of Panathenaic amphorae of the fifth century, one on the "trial of the statues" at Syracuse) and useful indexes of monuments and plates with very helpful references complete the volume. The plates are uniformly excellent.

GEORGE H. CHASE

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Outline Guide for the Practical Study of Foreign Languages. By LEONARD BLOOMFIELD. 16 pages. Linguistic Society of America, Baltimore 1942 \$0.25

By publishing this pamphlet and its sequel (Outline of Linguistic Analysis by Bloch and Trager, Baltimore 1942), The Linguistic Society of America has opened the way to a most significant contribution to the proper approach to foreign-language teaching and study in this country. To quote from page 1: "Our schools and colleges teach us very little about language, and what little they teach us is largely in error. The student of an entirely new language will have to throw off all his prepossessions about language, and start with a clean slate. The sounds, constructions, and meanings of different languages are not the same: to get an easy command of a foreign language one must learn to ignore the features of any and all other languages, especially of one's own."

Every teacher of foreign language ought to read this pamphlet, and every reader of this review who is concerned with sound teaching ought to see to it that every teacher whom he knows has a chance to read it. Our fundamental difficulty in this country has arisen from the fact that language majors invariably know virtually nothing about language. Some of the world's most eminent linguistic scholars live in the United States, yet the fruits of their research are unknown to a vast number of people whose very business it ought to be to know much about them. Now, when the need for

foreign-language study is evident, teachers and students should be able to benefit by the instruction and the publications of those scholars who can bring the whole subject of linguistic science to them.

Bloomfield gives examples of the mistake of asking for the equivalent of some word in a foreign language (e.g., English *to be* which may have a dozen different translations; as an experiment in this kind of thing, ask someone who is interested in language how English *go* could be translated by *be* in one language and by *have* in another when used in the same context. A question like this sounds very strange but if we consider the expression "No one will go hungry" we find that *go* is here equivalent to *be*, while French could render it by the familiar idiom *aura faim*.)

Foreign speech sounds are explained in detail. The very first thing that should be explained to a class of beginners is the fact that English-speaking people make a great many sounds that are not made by speakers of language *x*; speakers of language *x* make many sounds not made by speakers of English. A good example is the short *o* of Latin. There must be a hundred thousand people in this country today who were never told how to pronounce Latin *omnis* and who pronounce it *amnis*. This may not seem important, but it is important because it shows how completely language teachers have always violated this cardinal principle of language teaching: the explanation of the differences between the sound patterns of their native language and those of any other language. It is important because the study of any language ought to teach language and linguistic practice and procedure to the student.

The pamphlet gives instructions for learning a new language from a native informant; it also shows clearly the error of supposing that alphabetic symbols necessarily stand for certain sounds. The strengthening and perpetuation of this ruinous error which is invariably made by the beginner may be traced to textbooks, say in French, which would have it that *s*, for instance, is pronounced thus and so. How could any such statement enable a student to begin to say Fr. *sur*? Or how does anyone "pronounce" the *-u-* of *quick* in English?

The reader who has persevered thus far realizes that this is an essay rather than a review. But that is because this pamphlet and its sequel already referred to seem to me to point the way toward the only method of sound instruction in foreign languages. Some familiarity with linguistic science and at least one intensive course in linguistics must be demanded of every teacher. How better could such a goal be achieved than with the help of The Linguistic Society of America whose members could offer such courses at centers throughout the country?

JOHN F. GUMMERE

WILLIAM PENN CHARTER SCHOOL, PHILADELPHIA

THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING
of the
CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE ATLANTIC STATES

President: Miss Edna White, Dickinson High School, Jersey City

Vice-Presidents: Professor E. L. Hettich, New York University, and Professor Franklin B. Krauss, Pennsylvania State College

Secretary-Treasurer: Dr. John F. Gummere, William Penn Charter School, Philadelphia

THE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HOTEL, PHILADELPHIA

Friday, April 30 and Saturday, May 1, 1943

With the cooperation of the Philadelphia Classical Society

Chairman of Local Committee on Arrangements: Miss Ruth Hoffsten, Girls' High School, Philadelphia

FRIDAY, APRIL 30

12:30 P.M. Luncheon Meeting of the Executive Committee

2:30 P.M. Papers

The Proper Blending of *Utile* and *Dulce* in Secondary Latin Teaching

DR. P. J. DOWNING, Browning School, New York

The Hibernation of the Humanities

PROFESSOR OSCAR JAMES CAMPBELL, Columbia University

The Continuity of Italian Culture from the Roman Empire Onward

DR. DAVID RANDALL-MACIVER

Business Session followed by social hour

7:30 P.M. Dinner Meeting in conjunction with *American Friends of Greece*

PRESIDENT EDNA WHITE, presiding

Address: Archaeology and Reconstruction in Greece

PROFESSOR T. LESLIE SHEAR, Princeton University

(Reservations for tickets at \$2.50 should be addressed as early as possible to
PROFESSOR H. B. ASH, University of Pennsylvania.)

SATURDAY, MAY 1

9:30 A.M. Papers and Discussions

VICE-PRESIDENT FRANKLIN B. KRAUSS, presiding

Making the Community "Latin Conscious"

DR. BERNICE V. WALL, Taft Junior High School, Washington

Making the School "Latin Conscious"

DR. EMORY E. COCHRAN, Fort Hamilton High School, Brooklyn

Making the College "Latin Conscious"

PROFESSOR CASPER J. KRAEMER, JR., New York University

The Intensive Language Program and the Teaching of Latin

PROFESSOR EDGAR H. STURTEVANT, Yale University

Humanism and the Return to Reason

PROFESSOR I. L. KANDEL, Columbia University

2:15 P.M. Business Meeting

2:30 P.M. Papers

The Charm of the Greek Anthology

PROFESSOR DONALD BLYTHE DUKHAM, Hamilton College

The Classics in the New Democratic Curriculum

REV. J. EDWARD COFFEY, S. J., St. Peter's College